



For Immediate Release

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BOARD APPROVES SOME EMPOWERING PARENTS RECOMMENDATIONS

The Idaho State Board of Education today approved some recommendations made by the Empowering Parents Program Parent Advisory Panel to expand services and products allowable for purchase by recipients of Empowering Parents micro grants.

Examples of additional services and products approved by the Board today include:

- Registration fees and required materials for educational camps and classes offered for a fee by a Board-approved vendor
- Backpacks, computer cases, and tools for science classes
- Physical education equipment, gear, uniforms, or pay-to-play fees required to participate in organized P.E. activities
- Musical instruments and related tutoring services
- Costumes and uniforms necessary to participate in educational camps, classes or events (dance uniforms, karate uniforms, camp t-shirts)

The Board also approved the following changes to Empowering Parents business procedures:

- Streamline vendor approval process and allow parents to suggest vendors for the Empowering Parents online platform
- Expand vendor services to rural and remote communities
- Implement a vendor review process for parents and patrons of the program to review marketplace vendors
- Request the marketplace vendor to enhance communication with vendors
- Adjust the application open date for the first wave of each annual appropriation to align with the start of the school year for the 2024/25 school year
- Adjust the application process to allow parents to indicate when a court order related to child custody exists and create procedures to ensure that Empowering Parents grant awards are accessible only to the parent or legal guardian with authority to make educational decisions for the respective child

The Board also expressed support for the Panel’s other recommendations requiring statutory changes. Here are examples:

- Include requirement that students must reside in Idaho to participate in the program
- Provide grant recipients one additional year to spend grant awards (the current timeframe is two years)
- Allow direct reimbursements for internet services

The second year of the Empowering Parents program is anticipated to begin in mid-to-late November.

Lewis-Clark State College Presentations

The State Board of Education is sitting as the Board of Trustees for Lewis-Clark State College during this week’s Regular Board meeting.

Lewis-Clark State College President Dr. Cynthia Pemberton presented her institution’s annual report, touting recent increases in student retention and enrollment (up 2 percent in fall 2022 compared to 2021), which she attributes in part to LCSC’s increased efforts to promote programs and recruit students throughout the state. She also credits partnerships with other Idaho public institutions to expand LCSC’s offerings, particularly in health care education, calling her institution the “healthcare hub of northern Idaho.” Dr. Pemberton said

that she expects Governor Brad Little's Idaho LAUNCH program will help improve enrollment in LCSC's career-technical education enrollment numbers.

The Board also heard from LCSC students, faculty and staff.

Many students said they are attending LCSC specifically because they wanted a small college experience and how they have benefitted because of smaller student/instructor ratios and the support they have received as a result. A faculty member described the campus as a "family" and that faculty and employees share a passion for student success. Another faculty member shared an example of a student who came to LCSC from the foster care system, who gained confidence and developed a passion for teaching and who is now pursuing a PhD in chemistry at a larger institution.

Other Board actions include:

- Final approval of a new Board policy that prohibits requesting written diversity statements from candidates applying for employment at Idaho's four-year institutions.

The second day of the Board's Regular Board Meeting continues tomorrow Thursday, October 19 starting at 9 a.m. Pacific Time

The agenda, and Board meeting materials are posted on the State Board of Education website: <https://boardofed.idaho.gov/event/board-meeting-lewiston-5/>

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